

Lady Death

The Crucible



Lady Death®

"The Crucible #1/2"



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LADY DEATH: THE CRUCIBLE #1/2

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THE ENDLESS GRAVEYARD,
FIVE YEARS AGO.

ONCE THIS REALM WAS
HELL, LUCIFER'S DOMAIN.

SCREAMS OF THE DAMNED
AND MADNESS PERVADED.
THE CONSTANT TORRENT
OF ENDLESS SUFFERING
SOUNDED LIKE AN INSANE
RITUAL OF MASS MISERY.

BUT WITH A SINGLE SWEEPING MONUMENTAL
GESTURE, LADY DEATH MADE IT TO HER LIKING.

NOW IT'S A COLD, SILENT, SOLITARY
PLACE STEEPED IN DARKNESS.

CLOUDS STRETCH FROM HORIZON
TO HORIZON LIKE A FUNERAL
SHROUD. A STORM BREWS.

ON A TYPICAL EVENING, THE GENTLE
RHYTHM OF NOOSES SWAYING IN THE
BREEZE LULL THE QUEEN OF THE
DEAD AND DYING INTO A DEEP,
SATISFYING SLEEP.

BUT NOT TONIGHT.

TONIGHT, SOMETHING
IS AMISS.

SOMEONE,
SOMETHING HAS
BEEN LOOTING MY
POSSESSIONS
OF LATE.

FROM THE
CREAKS IN THE
FLOORBOARDS AND
THE HEINOUS STINK I'D
WAGER THE CULPRITS
HAVE RETURNED!

GOOD.
NOW I'LL GET
TO THE BOTTOM
OF THIS!



Who Who who!

Ha Ha Ha!

Hoo Hoo Hoo!

Who Who who!

Ha Ha Ha!

Hoo Hoo Hoo!

THE GRAVITY-DEFYING SCAVENGERS ARE CALLED SCARBOILS.



THEY HAIL FROM A REALM THAT MAKES HELL SEEM LIKE HEAVEN.

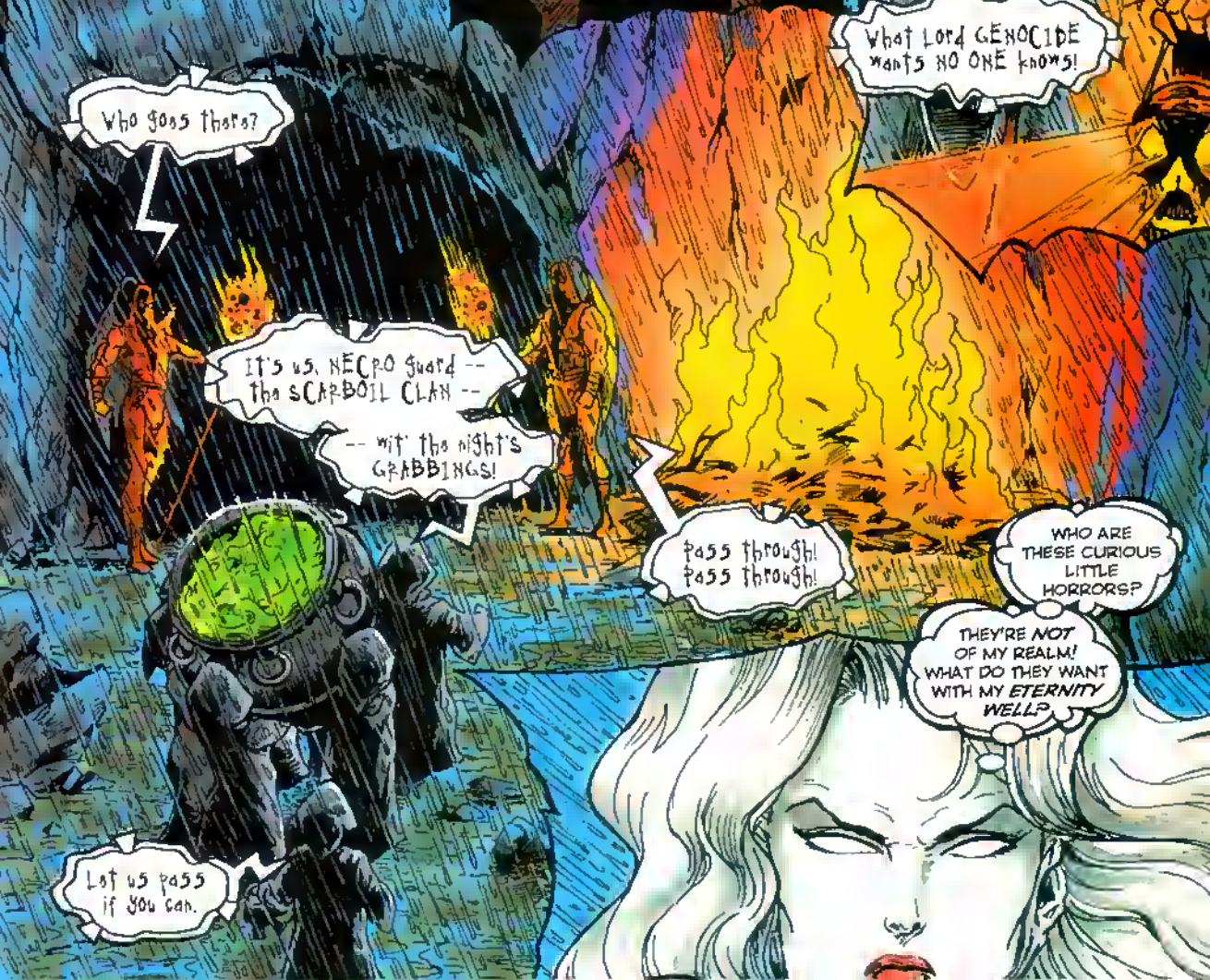


Lord GENOCIDE will be pleased ALMIGHTY wit' the GRABBINGS!!

Bah Ya HIT! You CAN'T know!

Ours is just to REAP and SOW!

What Lord GENOCIDE wants NO ONE knows!



Who goes there?

It's us, NECRO Guard -- the SCARBOIL CLAN --

-- wit' the night's GRABBINGS!

Pass through! Pass through!

WHO ARE THESE CURIOUS LITTLE HORRORS?

THEY'RE NOT OF MY REALM! WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH MY ETERNITY WELLP

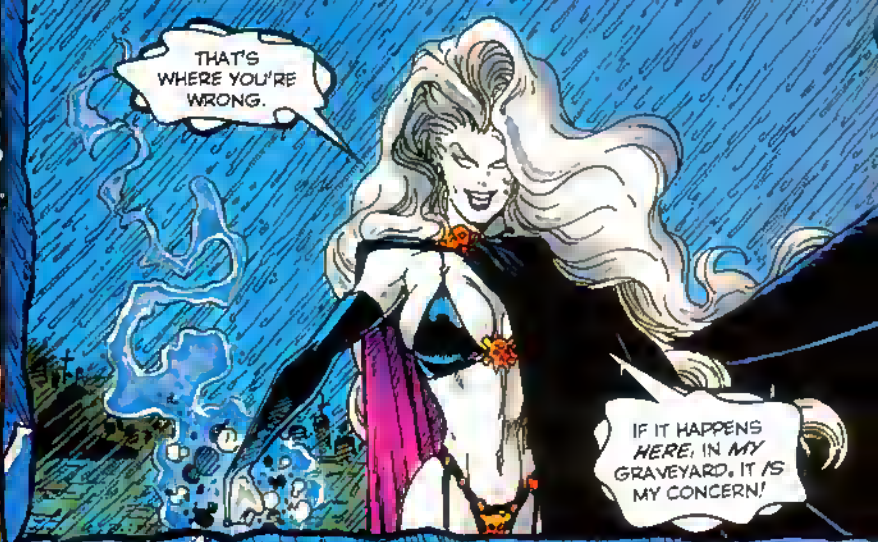
Let us pass if you can.



LET ME THROUGH!

Got along!

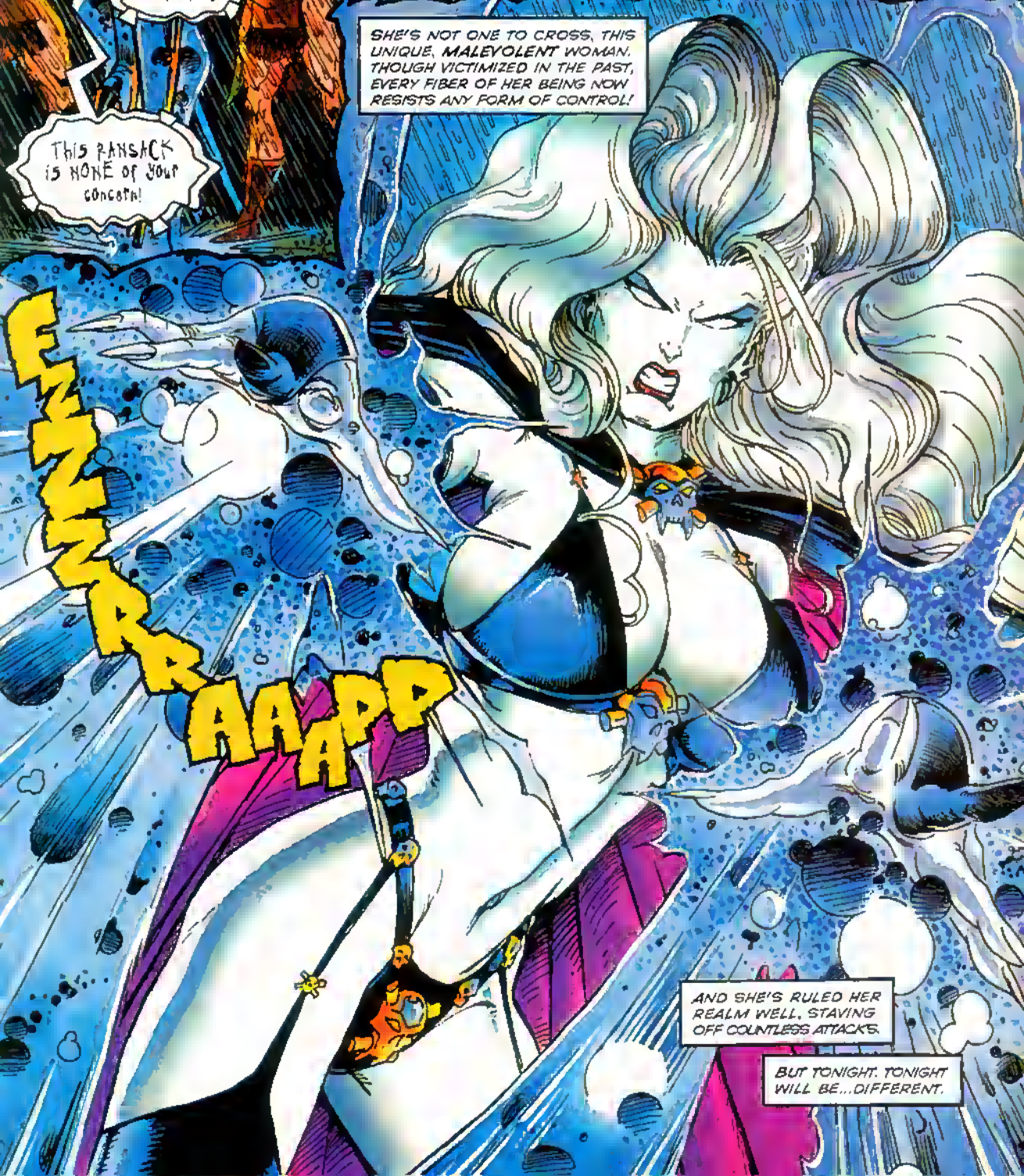
THIS RANSACK IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN!



THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG.

IF IT HAPPENS HERE, IN MY GRAVEYARD, IT IS MY CONCERN!

SHE'S NOT ONE TO CROSS, THIS UNIQUE, MALEVOLENT WOMAN, THOUGH VICTIMIZED IN THE PAST, EVERY FIBER OF HER BEING NOW RESISTS ANY FORM OF CONTROL!



EEEE
RR
AA
PP


AND SHE'S RULED HER REALM WELL, STAVING OFF COUNTLESS ATTACKS.

BUT TONIGHT, TONIGHT WILL BE...DIFFERENT.




THAT'S RIGHT.
BOW BEFORE ME!

HA HA HA!



BIZARRE!
THEY'VE STOLEN ALL
MANNER OF OBJECTS, SOME
INCONSEQUENTIAL,
SOME VALUABLE!


WHY?



INTERLOPER!

OUTSIDERS
CANNOT GAZE
UPON THE UNHOLY
RANSSACK!


YOUR PRESENCE
HERE IS FORBIDDEN!



MY PRESENCE
YOU REALIZE WHO
YOU'RE THREATENING?!
YOU REALIZE WHO'S
LAND YOU TREAD UPON?




I AM DEATH!
LADY DEATH!



WHAT?
FROM ABOVE!

RRRGHH!



AND YOU'VE
JUST MADE A GRAVE
MISTAKE!



IDLE THREATS
FROM SSSOFF
SSSKIN

SSSHES
LIVED
LUXURY!

FRACK

Scatter
my brothers. don't you
know - eh?

WHO IS
GENOCIDE?

AND WHY
ARE YOU LOOTING
MY REALM?!

I'VE GROWN
TAUNT IN THE WAR
PITSSS!

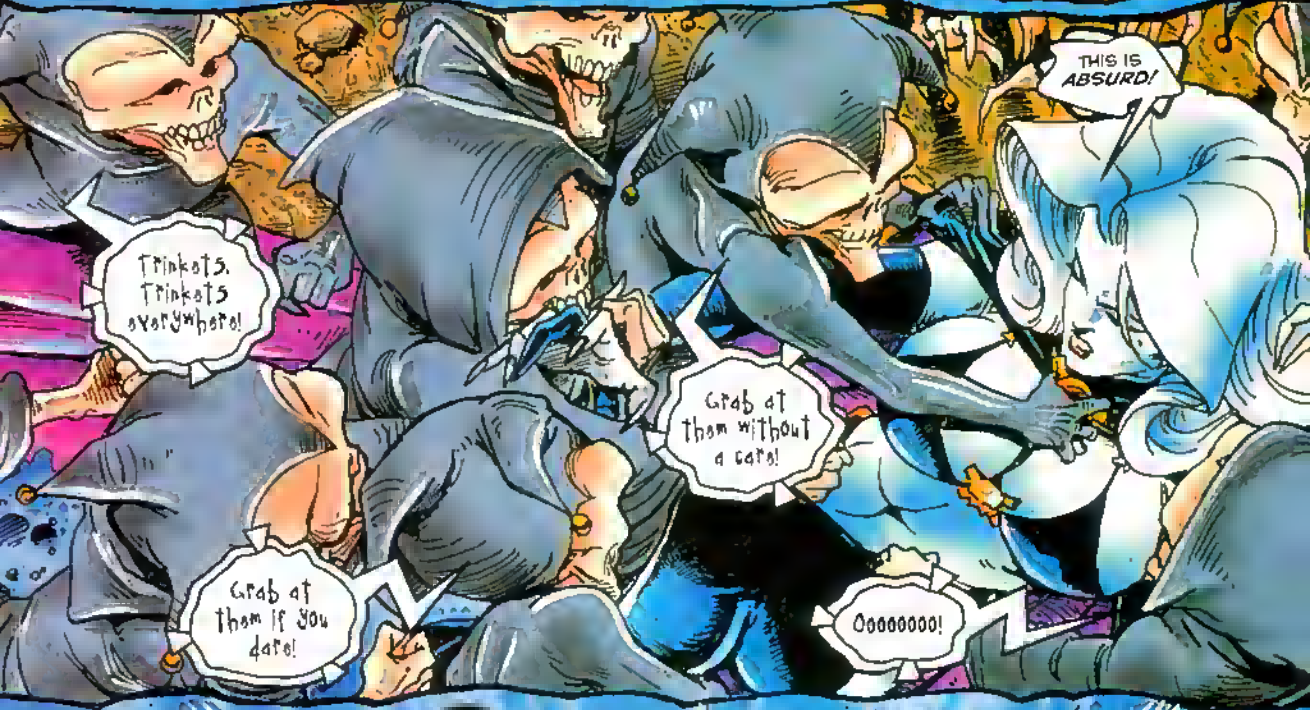
YOU'RE NO
MATCH SSSOFF SSSKIN!
I GUARD THIS RANSSACK
FOR GENOCIDE!

WE'LL SEE
ASSASSIN! WE'LL
SEE!

-- To down
below here
they --

THUMP!

Gulp go!



CALLING UPON AN INHERENT POWER
DEEP WITHIN HER, LADY DEATH
MANIFESTS HER SOUL SWORD,
DARKNESS, FORGED FOR HER BY
HELL'S BLACKSMITH CREMATOR.

YOU SPEAK
IN RIDDLES, OUTLANDER.
BUT YOUR INTENTIONS
ARE CLEAR.

PRAY TO YOUR
MAKER, SINISTRA.
MAYBE HE WILL SHOW
YOU MERCY. COUNT ON
NONE FROM ME!

AS YOU
WISH, SSSOF
SSSKIN!

SKIT

SHURAKA

SKIT

SUDDENLY THE HARSH ODOR OF ASH AND
BRIMSTONE OVERCOMES THE CAVERNS
AS THE AIR IS CHARGED WITH A FEARSOME,
ANCIENT EVIL ENERGY.

WAIT,
SINISTRA.



IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS CHAOS;
THE TIME BEFORE CREATION. A SWIRLING
MASS OF UNCERTAINTY, FORMLESS,
WITHOUT ORDER, WITHOUT BOUNDARIES.

BEINGS OF INDESCRIBABLE, PRIMAL
POWER WAGED WAR ON ALL UNIVERSAL
PLANES. HIERARCHIES ROSE AND FELL.
HOLOCAUSTS ABOUNDED IN CONSTANT,
BLINDING DEATHFLASHES.

BUT IN TIME AND THROUGH TRICKERY,
CHAOS LED TO CREATION AND THE UNIVERSE
GREW CALM AND DEFINED BY LIGHT AND DARK.

YET A FEW REFUSED ORDER AND
HELD TO THE ANCIENT WAYS OF
CHAOS. THIS BEING TOWERING
OVER SINISTRA WAS AMONG THEM.

THIS GRAVEWORLD
IS UNIQUE. I HAPPENED
ON IT AS I WAS SCANNING
THE WORLDS WAY FOR
SITES TO RANSACK.

STRANGE. IT EXISTS
PARALLEL TO HELL, BUT
SLIGHTLY OUT OF PHASE OF IT.
DID THIS SOFT SKIN BRING IT ABOUT
OR IS MY LITTLE BROTHER
LUCIFER UP TO HIS PETTY
TRICKS AGAIN?

LORD
GENOCIDE!

W-WHAT
BRINGS YOU HERE,
LORD?

POWER.

UH OH.

UH OH.

UH OH.





SHE RUNS
HEAD ON TO ATTACK.
HER MIND CLOUDED
WITH ANGER.

SUCH FOLLY.

BUT THE
INHERENT POWER SHE
WIELDS IN THAT SWORD
...REMARKABLE!

INSOLENT
CHILD.

SO YOU
LEAD THESE SCAVENGERS
AND VAGABONDS?!

GENOCIDE,
YOU WILL RUE
THIS DAY!

MY
SOULSWORD!

KLANK

THE SWORD.
IT COULD PROVE USEFUL
IN MY GRAND SCHEME.

DARKNESS
IS NOT FOR
THE TAKING!

SO IT WOULD
APPEAR.

ITS POWER IS
LINKED DIRECTLY TO HER.
A BIRTHRIGHT?

SHE'S A
UNIQUE CREATURE.
WORTH EXPLORING.



UNHAND ME!

A MIND
MERGE IS IN
ORDER!

WITH A MINIMAL EFFORT, GENOCIDE
SEIZES CONTROL OF LADY DEATH -

- AND PROBES THE INNER
RECESSES OF HER MIND

AAARRRRGGGHHH

AS I SUSPECTED.
SO MUCH MORE. HIDDEN IN
HER SUBCONSCIOUS IS A LOST
HERITAGE SHE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT.
THE POWER THAT FUELS
THE SWORD IS THE KEY!

IT'S A REALM BEYOND -
A WARRIOR REALM.

INTERESTING.
LUCIFER HAS TWISTED
THIS WOMAN'S MIND FOR HIS
OWN DEVICES. SUCH PETTY GAMES.
IT WILL BE YOUR UNDOING.
LUCIFER, I GUARANTEE IT.

Rite, Vauldlat!
Now and forevermore,
you are pledged to loyalty,
bravery, and above all Herolem.
You are a WARRIOR.
You are a VALKYRIE!

THIS REALM, ASGARD.
IT'S JUST WHAT I'VE SEARCHED
FOR! SUCH POWER! HOW...CORRUPTIBLE.
IT IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO
CONSUMMATE MY SCHEME.

I shall make
that name proud,
VULNAVIA!

AWAY!
YOU'VE SERVED MY
PURPOSE.



A THOUSAND
THANKSSS YOUR
GRACE!

SSSHE SHALL
REGRET EVER
RAISSING HER SSSWORD
AGAINSSST YOU!

WHAT JUST
HAPPENED? CAN'T
REMEMBER.

MIND... FOGGY.
WHO ARE THESE
CREATURES?

WAIT, YES!
THEY RANSACKED MY
MANSION! STOLE MY
ETERNITY WELL!

I SSSHALL
BEHEAD HER IN YOUR UNHOLY
NAME, GENOCIDE!

AAAAAAAAAAAA!

SKEET

BOLD WORDS,
THIEF!

THIS IS
HOW I PUNISH
LOOTERS IN MY
GRAVEYARD!

THAT TOOK
THE FIGHT OUT
OF YOU!
HA HA HA!

NOW GET
OUT OF MY
SIGHT!

FOR A MILLENNIA,
I'VE DEDICATED MY RESOURCES
TO RANSACKING REALMS IN
SEARCH OF OBJECTS OF
INFINITE POWER.

WITH THE COMING
OF THE JUDGMENT ERA,
HEAVEN AND HELL WILL BE LOCKED
IN BATTLE, CONSUMED
WITH EACH OTHER.

THEY WILL BE
RIPE FOR THE PICKING!

AND WITH THE POWER
THAT LIES IN ASGARD,
I WILL FINALLY BE ABLE TO
ELIMINATE THE PRIM AND
PROPER UNIVERSAL ORDER, AND ONCE
AGAIN, CHAOS! SHALL REIGN!

YOU HAD YOUR
CHANCE, SINESTRA.
YOU FAILED.

PREPARE
TO LEAVE.

NO, PLEASE
MY LORD! NOT AFTER
WHAT SSSHE'S DONE!

MY FACE!
THIS ISN'T OVER!

WHAT ABOUT THE
GRABBINGSSS?!

FORGET THEM!

I'VE IMPORTANT
MATTERS TO
ATTEND TO.

WHAT WAS
THAT ALL ABOUT?

THE END?

NEXT: LEARN ALL THE ANSWERS IN:

LADY DEATH:
the CRUCIBLE!

COMING IN OCTOBER!
ORDER AT YOUR
COMIC SHOP NOW!

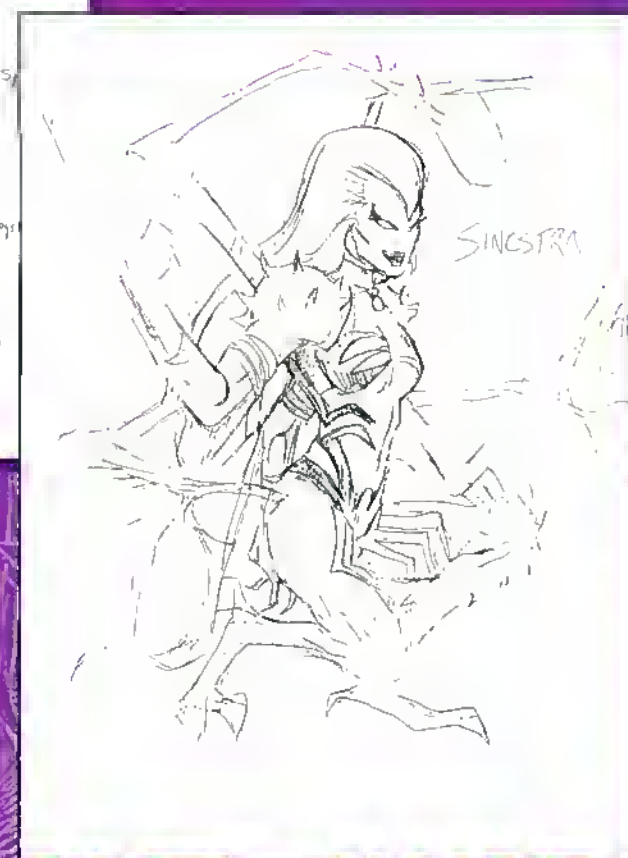
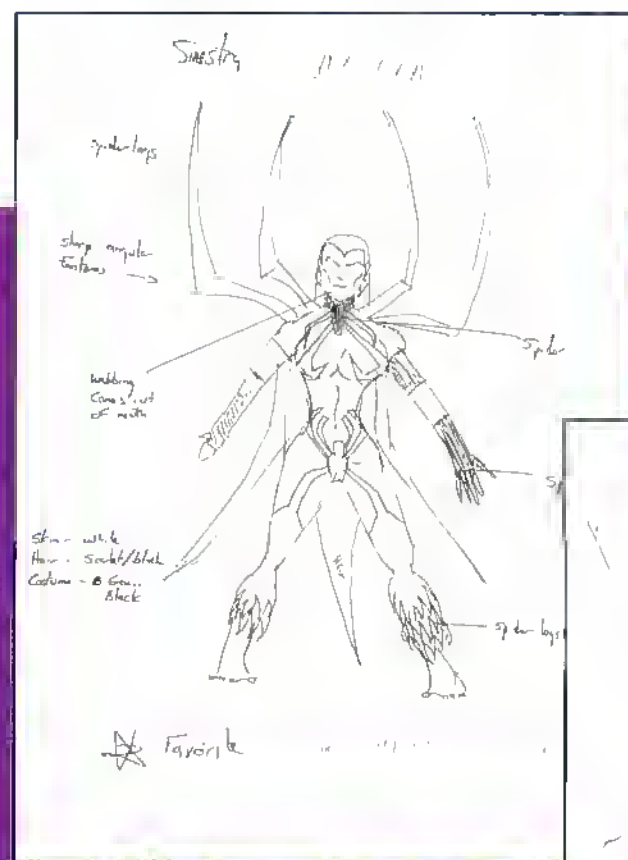
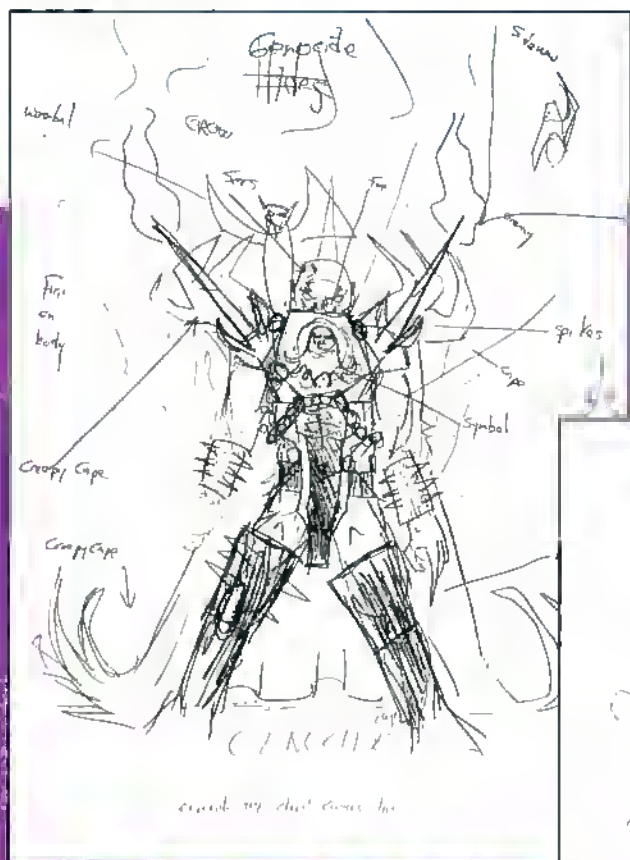
sketchbooks

lady death

BEHIND
THE
SCENES
GOODIES

SOME NEW CHARACTERS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE. THEY ALL START WITH A INITIAL CHARACTER DESIGN BY BRIAN PULIDO, THEN STEVEN HUGHES TIGHTENS UP THEIR FINAL LOOK. HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK AT THE GENESIS OF GENOCIDE...

... AND SINISTRA.



LADY DEATH

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LADY DEATH #12

LADY DEATH
LADY DEATH

LADY DEATH

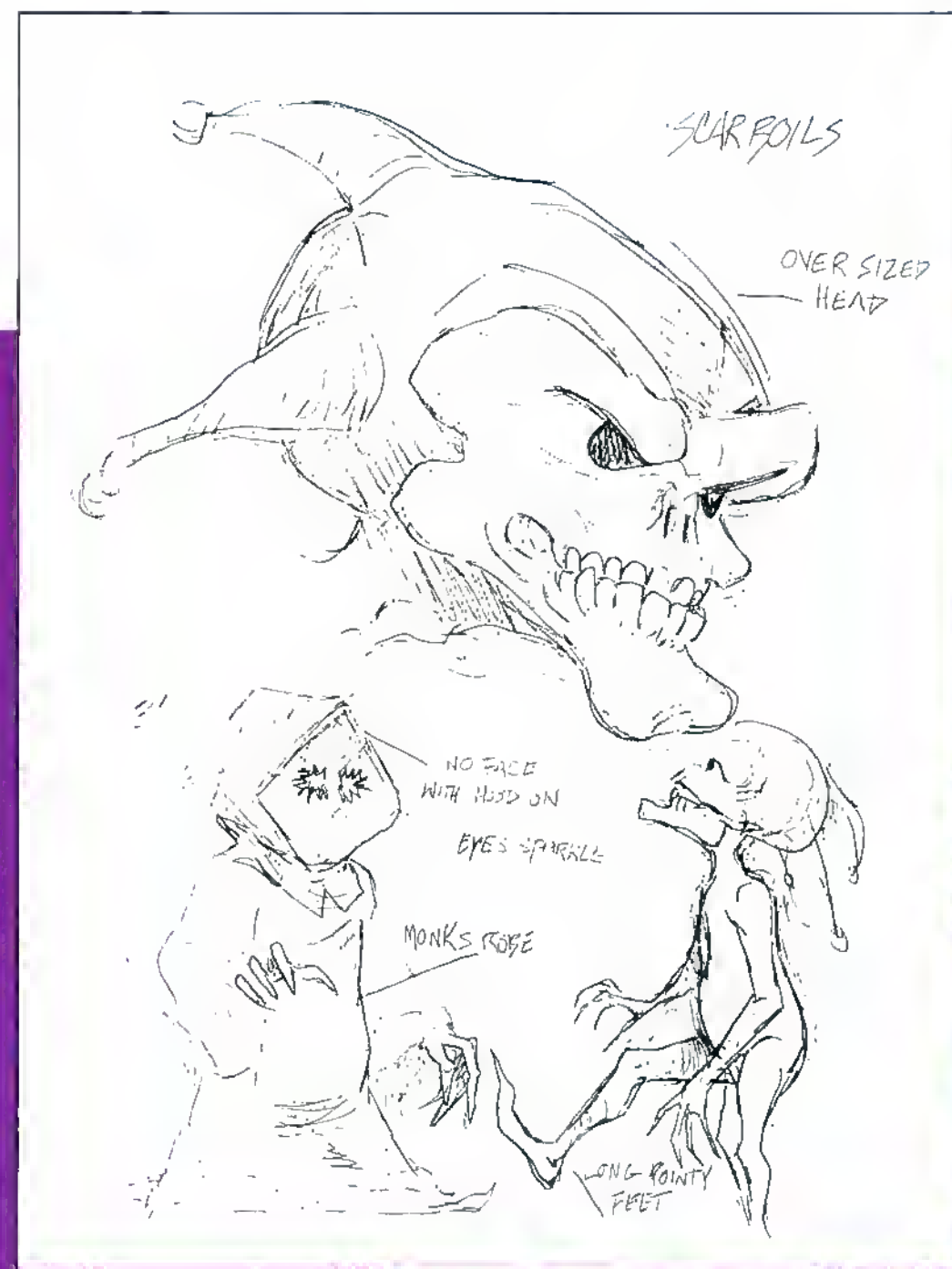
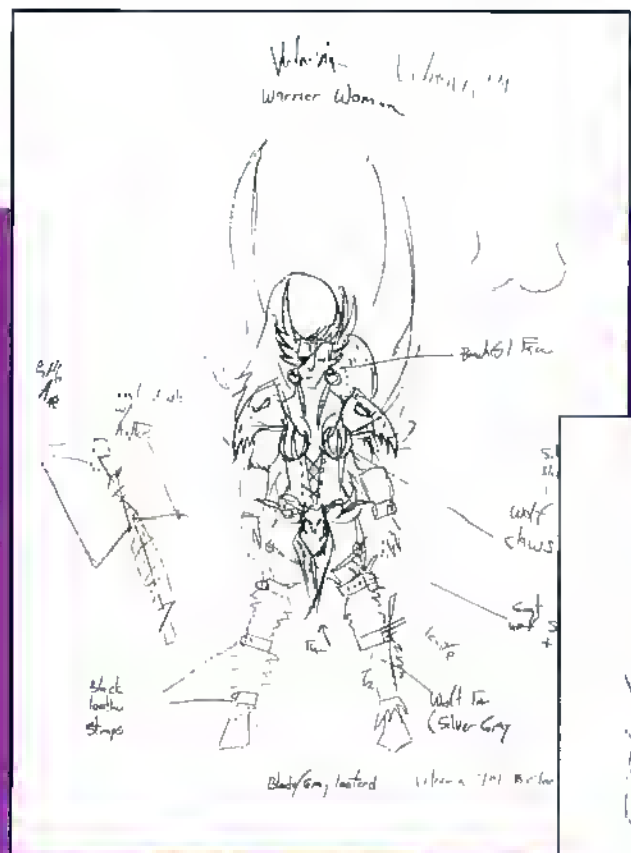
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LADY DEATH #13

LADY DEATH
LADY DEATH

sketchbook

THE NASTY VULNAVIA AND SCARBOILS ALSO APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE. HERE'S A LOOK AT THE THOUGHTS THAT WENT INTO THEIR CREATION.



sketch

HERE'S A LOOK AT BRIAN PULIDO'S FIRST HANDWRITTEN DRAFT FOR THE FIRST FEW PAGES OF THIS ISSUE, ALONG WITH PULIDO'S LAYOUT NOTES.

①

2nd E

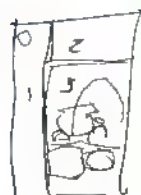
CAPE

1

① Eat Endless Graveyard.

Captain: Lady Death's Endless Graveyard
Five years ago...

Stormy
Coming



② Eat shot - LD's mansion + graveyard
Scarboils Scampering w/ stick held lanterns.

By shot → ③ LD, foreground, is thinking in her bed, but awake. In the background
the Scarboils are taking the "eternity well"

*The Scarboils look cartoony, but are serious. Their actions are
sort of funny, but their intent isn't. Since they have
stubby arms + legs - they come off funny.

LD notes

LD: Ah finally. My possessions
these last few nights.

④ I hear the culprits

lighting

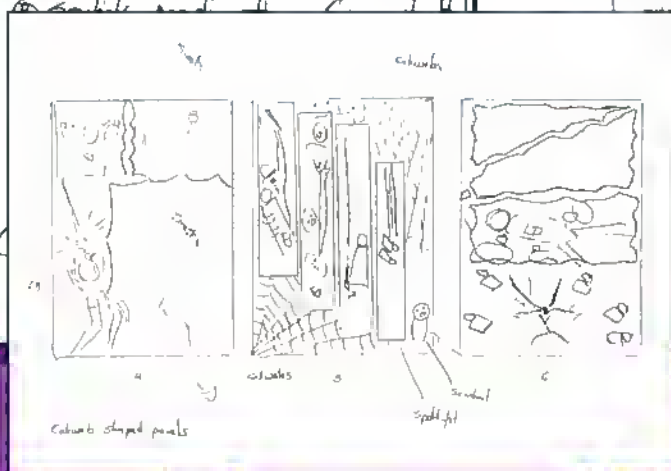
webs



⑤ ① Hot Panel - Scarboils walking down w/ (Sands of Luc'Jinn)

② Scarboils walking down w/ (Sands of Luc'Jinn)

open ...



fly up to 2

sketch

A BLAST FROM THE PAST! HERE ARE SOME STEVEN HUGHES LADY DEATH CONCEPT SKETCHES FROM WAY BACK IN 1991-92.



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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

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Lady Death™



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